

"A *wilderness*, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the *landscape*, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are *untrammelled* by man, where man himself is a *visitor* who does not remain."

Wilderness Act of 1964

In September 3, 1964 President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Wilderness Act into law, which marked one of the United States’ greatest achievements for wilderness preservation and conservation. Thus the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) was created, which reclassified federal wild lands into properly designated wilderness areas. The NWPS, 9.1 million acres at its inception, now consists of 109 million acres across the United States. Approximately half of wilderness designated areas are located within Alaska, which makes this state exceptionally unique. This year marks a time of reflection while celebrating 50 years of American wilderness.



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Alaska Wilderness Stories

Legacy of United States Wilderness in the last Fifty Years

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About the Project

Alaska Wilderness Stories is a series of audio stories about people interacting with Alaska's wilderness. These radio stories were created in hopes to educate the public while celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act in 2014. The project is an investigation of how people live, work, and play in Alaska’s wilderness, what an official wilderness designation actually means, and the value of wilderness to individuals and communities. The project’s purpose is to promote a better understanding of wilderness for a broader audience while celebrating the legacy of land preservation in the last 50 years. Through these radio pieces, I hope that audiences will be captivated and educated about wilderness areas and designation in Alaska in a quick and interesting manner that is also celebratory and sensitive to the anniversary of the Wilderness Act.



Radio Stories Synopses

Chugach National Forest-
Southcentral Alaska

Summer in the land of the Midnight Sun is in full swing and a group of Alaskan youth is on an epic kayaking adventure around Prince William Sound. This journey is part of Chugach National Forest and Alaska Geographic's Chugach Children's Forest 2013 youth expedition program. The young people on this adventure learned about marine debris, invasive species, and trail work in wilderness areas while having the opportunity to work and play in the outdoors. The students explored the fringes of Chugach National Forest's Nellie Juan College Fiord Wilderness Study Area. We learn the congressional difference between designated wilderness and a “wilderness study area” as it pertains to Alaskans, young and old alike, living near Prince William Sound as well as some issues which affect these busy waterways.

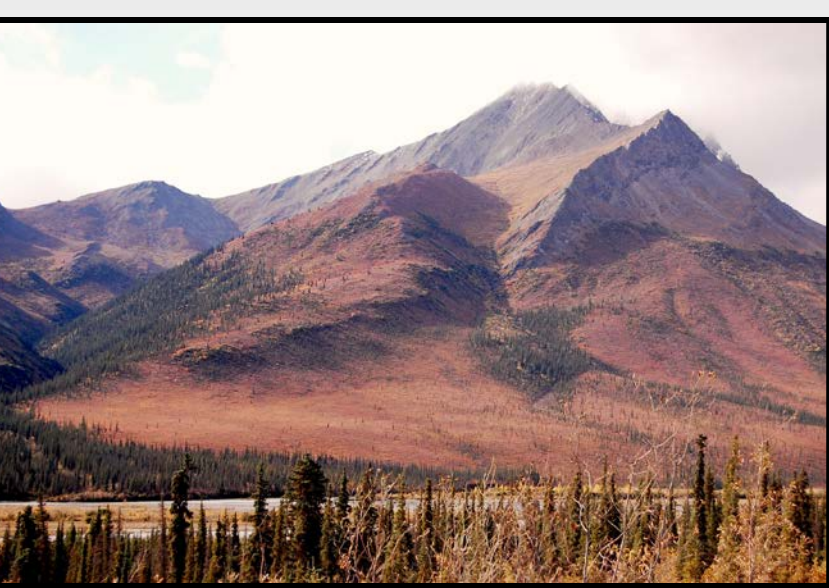
Clockwise from Top: 1) A group of students building a fish weir in a stream out of Pigot Bay, PWS. 2) Group photo. 3) Pulling invasive Icelandic poppies off the riverbank. 4) Interviewing a student scoping out marine debris in PWS. 5) Students kayaking from Blackstone Glacier.



Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve-
Northern Alaska

A large white polar bear separates Expedition Arguk's Paxson Woelber and his team from packrafting the rest of their way to the Arctic Ocean. The purpose of Expedition Arguk's month long trip through the Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve and the National Petroleum Reserve was to bring back media from remote wilderness areas of the Arctic to share with the rest of the world. What is wilderness to humans? Why is this symbolic ideal of nature so important to people in today's society? Paxson Woelber, along with former Gates Artist-In-Residence artist Carolyn Kremers and Arctic Treks owner Carol Kasza attempt to find answers through their personal experiences in the Brooks Range and the Arctic.

Top to Bottom: 1) Woelber packrafting down the Colville River (Photo courtesy of Expedition Arguk). 2) Brooks Range landscape. 3) Arctic Village Elder Trimble Gilbert sharing knowledge of cutting fish.



Project Outcome

The stories will contribute to a larger series which will air in August 2014, but all radio pieces can also be accessed on Alaska Geographic's Wilderness 50 page: www.alaskageographic.org/static/1214/50th-wilderness-anniversary

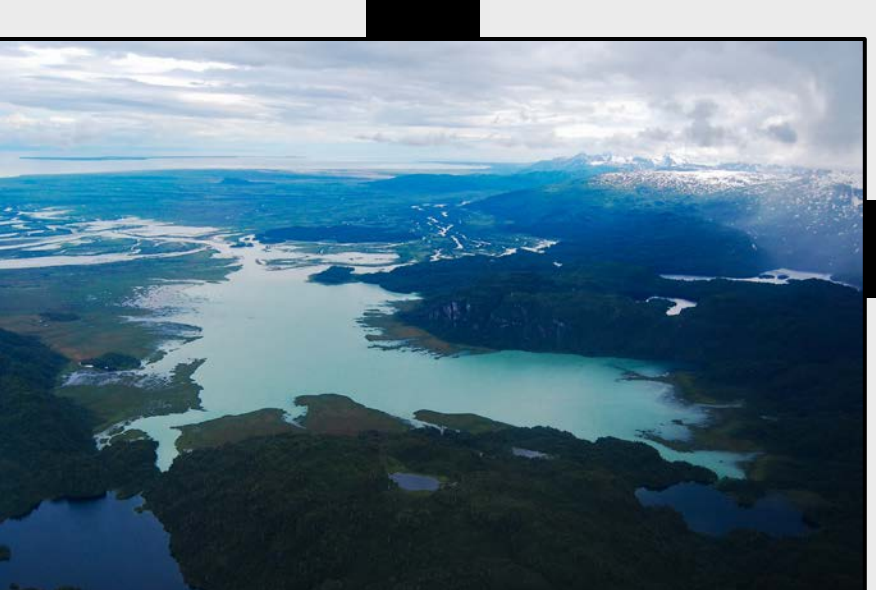
Project Collaboration

- The Alaska Wilderness Stories project was made possible through the partnership of the **Northern Alaska Environmental Center, Content Producers Guild** and **Alaska Geographic** with the support of the following:
- UAF's URSA
 - Alaska Broadcasters Association
 - Alaska Teen Media Institute
 - KUAC Fairbanks
 - National Park Service
 - Chugach National Forest
 - US Fish & Wildlife
 - Alaska Wilderness League
 - And many more

Lake Clark National Park and Preserve-
Southwestern Alaska

Park Service cultural anthropologist and Nondalton resident Karen Evanoff has been going to fish camp below Six Mile Lake near Nondalton in Southwestern Alaska for as long as she can remember. When the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act passed in 1980, this created Lake Clark National Park and Preserve north of Nondalton and reclassified more than 104 million acres of Alaska land into new or enlarged parks and refuges. Since ANILCA, local communities like Nondalton adjusted to the presence of nationally designated wilderness. Citizens and Park Service discover their goals regarding land and resources of the area are sometimes not so different and may play an important role to sustaining local subsistence life.

Top to Bottom: 1) Interviewing a group of 7-10 year olds participating in Fish Camp. 2) Seining at twilight. 3) Landscape before Lake Clark Pass.



AWS in Patagonia

As an extension of the Alaska Wilderness Stories, two parks were visited in Southern Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego for a total of one month during spring semester 2014. Parque de Torres Del Paine, Chile's most famous national park is a famous stop on the Patagonia circuit and draws ever-growing crowds to hike the towers and see the remarkable wildlife. Omora Ethnobotanica Parque is a research park located on Navarino Island in Tierra del Fuego's Chilean Antarctica Region that seeks to protect 5% of the world's bryophytes in the unique Antarctic ecosystem. The two stories will take on the perspectives of locals and visitors alike while attempting to understand land preservation in one of the world's remaining wilderness areas in the circumpolar south.



Top to Bottom: 1) Torres del Paine towers seen with Lake Sarmiento below. 2) View of Campamento Chileno. 3) Huemul grazing on the Patagonian steppe.